i'm doing me better (than you doing you) by brawls (brawlite), ToAStranger

Series: i'll be coming for your love (okay?) [5]
Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)
Genre: M/M
Language: English
Characters: Billy Hargrove, Carol (Stranger Things), Steve Harrington, Tommy H. (Stranger Things)
Relationships: Billy Hargrove/Steve Harrington
Status: Completed
Published: 2018-08-20
Updated: 2018-08-20
Packaged: 2022-04-23 02:28:03
Rating: Explicit
Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply
Chapters: 1
Words: 13,172
Publisher: archiveofourown.org
Summary:

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Billy eyes it, eyes bright, grin crooked. “I’ve got a Hard On for Hargrove?”

“Cute, right?” Carol says, popping her gum. “I helped with the glitter.”

Billy snorts. “Sure. Cute.”

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Author's Note:

> Title song: Sweatpants by Childish Gambino
>
> I just really like this AU. And I just really like Steve taking care of Billy when he needs it.

Steve thinks he's being *funny* when he brings the sign to Billy's show. Tommy's in town just to see him, Carol in tow, engagement rings, like, *on* and shit even though they're out in *public* at a *bar* and sometimes they like to *play around*.

But the Hard Rock isn't a *joke*. It's a pretty serious venue, especially on a busy Saturday night, and Billy's not just *opening* for someone else; he's got, like, a *slot*. His own hour, up on stage, playing his own shit with his own band, but he does a few covers *too* because sometimes that's the only way to get people *interested*.

Billy's *surprised* to see him. Says so and everything when he finally climbs off the stage after a *delightful* rendition of *One Bourbon, One Scotch, One Beer* by James Thorogood, and Steve always, like, *forgets* how damn good Billy can be with a *guitar*. No matter how many times Steve tells him he loves his hands.

"You like the sign?" Steve asks, wiggling it at Billy when he finally threads through the crowd to find him and Tommy and Carol at the bar, slapping Tommy on the back and grinning, sweaty and *gorgeous* in his open shirt and tight pants and Steve wants to take him *home*.

Billy eyes it, eyes bright, grin crooked. "*I've got a Hard On for Hargrove*?"

"Cute, right?" Carol says, popping her gum. "I helped with the glitter."

Billy snorts. "Sure. Cute."

Billy waits until Tommy says something about *getting the man of the night a damn shot* and doesn't remind him that he gets free booze all

night, and Carol follows after him to flash her tits at the bartender so they can get their shit a little faster. Steve's laughing, teetering on his stool, already a good couple of drinks in when Billy presses in a little close.

"Thought you weren't coming?"

Steve knows he means *I thought you were too much of an anxious wreck when I left* and even *I'm glad you came*. Steve grins at him.

"It's not everyday my best friend gets his own spot at the Hard Rock."

"Well, I appreciate it," Billy says, with a little bit of a drawl. "Thanks, pretty boy."

Billy even reaches over, thumbing over the glitter on the sign, pulling back to look at his finger, amused. Probably wondering where Steve even *got* glitter.

"That and I had to show my sign off," Steve says, giving it another wiggle.

Steve's pretty sure Billy can *tell* how last minute his decision was. He's wearing *Sperry's* and a damn polo to the *Hard Rock*.

But Steve knows he looks cute. And Steve knows that *Billy* thinks he looks cute, because Billy's eyes keep *lingering* like he's hungry, like he's famished.

But doesn't *say* anything about it, because Tommy and Carol are back, pressing into their space, their moment, foisting drinks into both of their hands, loud and talkative about someone who looked a little too long at Carol's tits. Which is stupid, because she was *flashing* them.

"They're nice tits, though," Billy says. "You let me look all the time."

"You're gay as hell, Hargrove," she says.

Someone snorts, loud and pointed, a couple chairs down from where they're all connected at one of the cross section bar table seats. When Steve looks, it's some pale bulky dude in a *cowboy* hat of all fucking

things, and that *alone* tells Steve's he's not from around here.

Either that, or the guy lost the rest of his themed bachelor party.

It's Tommy, though, that presses. “Hey, man, you got a problem?”

The guy just *laughs*, loud and obnoxious.

“Yeah,” he says, and his voice tells Steve that *no one* is gonna like what he’s about to say. “I just didn’t know that faggot loving queers could play guitar. You learn something new *every day*.”

Next to him, Billy goes *still as a statue*.

And, *okay*, like, Steve isn't usually that person? Usually, he'd walk *away*, like, *right now*. Get them out of here.

But. *But* it's not *Steve* this guy is getting nasty with. It's *Billy*. And Steve kinda *gives a shit* about Billy.

And he's kinda keyed up *anyway* from watching Billy and generally being a hot mess.

So, he downs his drink and clears his throat. Gestures Carol close with two fingers.

“Hold this for me, sweetie?” he passes her the poster and kisses her cheek as he pushes to his feet.

Tommy is *instantly* at his flank. Just like when they were stupid kids, but now they're, like, stupid *adults*.

He turns to the guy, and, sure, he's *thick*. But this is *California*. Everyone's built in California, even Steve, in his own wiry way. And Steve's got a couple inches on him *in boat shoes*.

“Do you have, like, a *modicum* of an idea of where you even *are*, asshole?” Steve asks, and hopes he's using that word *right*-- it's *new*.

“Well, I know there's no escaping faggots, *apparently*,” this guy says.

And it's like he *wants* to fight.

Steve laughs. “You're *right*. In fact, take a walk about three blocks *that way* and you'll find plenty of *faggots* available to show you *exactly* how to get your biggot ass *out of town*.”

And then the guy shoves out of his seat.

And grins.

“What, did I insult your *boyfriend?”*

Steve knows he shouldn't. He *shouldn't*.

But, well, he's kinda already *started*, hasn't he?

“Actually? *Yes*.”

And Steve *swings*.

It's never been said that Steve Harrington is especially *good* in a scrap. Steve's gotten his ass beat, stamped, and handed back to him more times than he can remember, if he's being *real* honest.

But one thing he's good at? That first fucking punch.

Knocked Tommy's lights out with it once. Because he *knows* he's not any good at this, so he *pours* his *everything* into that first blow.

And sometimes? Sometimes it's *enough*.

This time, unfortunately, is *not* one of those times.

The guy gets knocked back, sure. Winded. He'll have a black eye the size of a *grapefruit* in an hour. But he springs back up and backhands Steve *hard*. Knocks him off his feet.

But that's what Tommy's there for.

Because Tommy's a lot like a rabid dog. And all Steve has to do is let him off the leash.

By the time Steve is pushing himself up, blinking the dizziness from his eyes, he can see Tommy just *going* for the guy. And Billy’s right there alongside him, looking just as rabid, just as feral.

Then again, Tommy's fighting for his friends. Billy's fighting for *himself*. And that's always -- well, it usually doesn't end *well*. For all parties involved.

"Fucking fairy-ass *faggots*," the guy says, before Billy decks him right in the jaw.

And now there's *other* people getting involved, like some of the guys from the same table, who are hissing slurs and punching back. It's *not* looking good. Especially not when Billy gets knocked back against the bar, breath knocked out of him for a good few seconds before he shoves himself back, going back to back with Tommy, like they're ready to take on the whole goddamn bar.

Steve scrambles to feet, to get up, to get to *Billy*, when just as suddenly there's a fight, there's two bouncers with fire extinguishers spraying them all down.

Somewhere, Carol *yelps*.

Steve's slammed back by someone, against the bar top table, and knocks the breath out of him. He loses sight of Billy for a hot minute and sinks to the floor.

Then, there's a big hand in his arm. "You start this?"

"Yeah," Steve croaks, but he's looking for *Billy*, sees him talking to someone at the bar, his hands everywhere, his jaw tight, and Steve goes for him, but Billy's got his own bouncer holding him by the arm as whoever he's talking to is-- nodding and saying *sorry*, over and over.

"Sorry, kid. I'm gonna have to escort you out--"

Steve strains a little. "Billy--!"

But he loses sight of him fast, pulled through the crowd and out the door.

It's long minutes before Steve sees anyone. And when he does, it's just Tommy and Carol, angrily walking out of the front door, escorted by their very own security guard, Billy nowhere in sight.

Before Steve can even *ask*, Carol says: “Billy's just getting his stuff. He'll be out in a bit.”

Next to her, Tommy's shifting on his feet, riled up from the fight and looking mean as hell.

Steve's feeling his anxiety from earlier bubble up and threaten to choke him. His mother always tells him to trust his intuition, he *knew* that tonight was gonna be bad, felt it at the *edges of his teeth*.

His breath is starting to come short and there are *people*. *Everywhere*.

But not *Billy*.

Tommy, riled as he is, gets an arm over Steve's shoulder and walks him away from the entrance. He *knows* Steve, *has known* him for pretty much forever. Since they were in diapers. Tommy gets him, knows when he's not feeling too hot.

As Tommy steers them toward somewhere quieter, Carol loops in on Steve's other side.

“Jesus, what *assholes,”* she says.

Tommy just snorts. Pulls out his phone. Shoots off a text real fast. Steve hopes it's to Billy, telling him where they *are*.

“Thought people were, like, liberal shitheads this side of the country.” Carol says, chattering a bit, and it gives Steve something to anchor to, even if he isn't, like, *listening*.

Tommy tucks his phone away, smiles at two girls who go stumbling by, and they're at the edges of the Gaslight district. Steve hopes Billy can *find* them; he has to make sure Billy's *okay*.

“That was a helluva swing, Stevie.”

Steve looks at Tommy, who's not quite looking at him. “Yeah,” he says, absent.

“Billy been giving the king some lessons.”

Carol hisses. “*Tommy--"*

“I'm serious!” Tommy squeezes at Steve's shoulders. “It was a good swing! Anybody else woulda been down. Guy was just thick headed.”

Steve snorts. He feels something in him ease a little, though not fully, even if his hands are kinda shaking.

He's got bruised knuckles and probably a bruised back, and they hurt when he moves his fingers. His *mouth* hurts, too.

When he checks, tonguing at it, he tastes blood. Jerks and checks his polo. Finds blood there, too.

“God *damn it*.”

Tommy grins. “Welcome back, gorgeous.”

But he's not quite back. Not yet. But he's busy fussing over his shirt, which is probably better than *freaking out*, so.

One second Billy's not there and the next he *is*. Striding up fast to where the three of them are standing, black eye already blooming on his face, guitar case clutched in what's gotta be a sore fist.

“*Hey*,” Billy says, rushed, like they've got somewhere to *be*, suddenly.

And Steve doesn't *know* that tone, exactly. Doesn't know what it *means*.

Steve just knows he wants to *touch him*. To *make it real.* But he doesn't know if that's *allowed*.

“*Billy*,” he sighs, everything else forgot, focus zeroing in, and he steps out from under Tommy's arm. “You're--”

“*Fine*,” Billy cuts him off before Steve can say a goddamn thing. “I'm fine, I'm calling an Uber, let's *go* somewhere.”

He looks like Tommy, shifting like he's too big for his skin, but he's amped up in a way Steve doesn't recognize. Or maybe, in a way that Steve hasn't seen in a *long* time.

And Steve-- Steve doesn't know how to *fix* it. How to make it *better*.

He's just happy Billy's *here*.

So, instead of arguing, he nods and holds out his wallet.

“Pick a hotel,” he says, shocked that his own voice is so steady. “Any hotel. We'll book a few rooms, or a suite or something, get high off the shit Carol's hiding in her purse. Postmate some booze. Trip until morning.”

Billy looks at Steve like he's nuts.

And then he looks at his phone like he's got no goddamn idea how to *use* it.

“I got it,” Carol says, already on some app, *already* booking some rooms.

“Good,” Steve nods, and he steps seamlessly into a roll he hasn't played since before he met Billy Hargrove, straightens, and claps Tommy on the shoulder. “Let's fucking *go*, jesus.”

He tries not to feel to tight in his own skin when Billy follows with a nod. Tries not to think about ruling a school-- a *town*-- and how that shit might've turned out if he'd still been doing it and added an attack dog like *Billy* at seventeen to his following. Tries not to wonder if it would've happened like that.

They get in a *Lyft* because Carol insists on that instead of Uber, and end up at the downtown Hilton. Steve passes over his credit card and ID when they walk in, and doesn't bat an eye at the deposit for the two rooms Carol booked them for.

He's got the money. He just doesn't *use* it. It was his *dad's* and it feels like *cheating*, but.

But this is a special occasion.

Carol and Tommy get off on the floor below Steve and Billy's. There up toward the top. Steve doesn't doubt she picked a nice suite for her and Tommy to trash, but he takes the baggy she passes him-- some

weed, a pipe, some pills, some powder-- all bundled in it as payment.

Then he rides up to the king suite she booked them on the sly with Billy at his side, coiled tight and near-statuesque next to Steve.

The second Steve opens the door, the second they're through it, Billy drops the case -- thank *god* it's expensive enough to keep the guitar safe -- and slams his fist directly into the wall.

Steve jumps, sucking in a tight breath, but that's all he does. Doesn't reach for him, doesn't call his name, just-- just *lets him* show this *rage.*

This *shame.*

Even if everything in him is saying to hold him. To *help him.*

Instead, Steve blinks. Wets his lips and stands a little taller.

“The wall isn't gonna hit back, baby.”

Billy rounds on him, shaking his fist with a hiss and bared teeth. And it's been *years* since they were the kinds of enemies who beat each other up, but for one split second, just the *one*, Steve wonders if that time’s that long past.

But then he sees Billy's *eyes*.

And sure, he looks angry, but he also looks *scared,* and *frustrated*, and *lost.* And that's not Billy's usual recipe for starting fights. Steve doesn't *know* what it is.

“Yeah, *well*,” Billy says, a little mean. Like there's another implication there, but he won't say it.

But *Steve* will.

“You want something that hits back?” Steve asks, tilts his head, spreads his arms like an offer.

Needs to know if Billy's that far *gone*. If he'll do it.

Billy snaps his teeth shut, teeth clicking together.

“I don't fucking *want* to hit you.”

Steve steps forward. Hands still loose at his sides. Arms still out. Open.

Not aggressive. Not a threat.

“What *do* you want, then?”

“I don't *know*,” Billy says, jaw still tight.

He's shaking, Steve notices. Very slightly, just trembling all over.

“I don't *fucking* know,” Billy says, and he sounds a little bit like he's about to *cry*, but he takes a step forward anyway.

Steve's shoulders go easy. “*Baby*. Come here.”

Billy pushes into Steve's arms, *hard.* Moving and pushing, a continuous force, until Steve’s pressed back up against the wall behind him. Billy's arms aren't even around him, hands just flat against the wall, like if he can, he can push hard enough and shove out of his own skin.

Steve winces a little because he's pretty sure he's gonna have an ugly bruise on his back from the bar. But it doesn't matter because the only thing that matters is *Billy*.

Carefully, slowly, Steve reaches up and cards his fingers through his hair. Rubs over his scalp. Presses his mouth to Billy's temple.

“You did *so good*, baby.” Steve says. “You were so brilliant up there, tonight. I'm *so sorry* some asshole tried to ruin it.”

Billy breathes and shakes as Steve touches him. Just fucking trembles, like he's about to come apart. He presses his face against Steve's neck and just pants, mouth open, like he can't get enough oxygen.

“Tried to find him. Tried to finish what he started.”

Steve goes still. Goes *cold*. Shudders out a breath and pulls Billy a

little closer.

“You didn't. You found me instead.”

“Yeah, but you're not gonna *hit* me,” Billy says. The words are muffled against Steve's neck, but they're there. Unmistakable.

“No,” Steve sighs, and feels something coil in his belly. “I'm not.”

And then he curls his fingers in Billy's hair. Curls them tight, until Billy hisses, and pulls a little, until Billy will meet his eyes.

“I'm never gonna hit you. Especially not *now.”* Steve says. “You've done *nothing* wrong. There is *nothing* wrong *about you*. And I'm gonna *prove it*. Understand?”

Billy doesn't nod, but he doesn't shake his head in disagreement either. Like he's not entirely in agreement with *something* Steve said, but Billy's never been much of an *over-sharer*. Not where it *mattered*, anyway.

“Yeah? How are you gonna prove *that*?”

Still plenty of fight left in him.

“Get on the bed,” Steve says, and lets him go.

Billy looks at him like he's grown a second head. Like he's *lost* without that hand in his hair, mouth agape.

“Billy,” Steve says again, low and unyielding. “Go sit on the bed.”

And Billy *goes*.

The bed creaks as he sits down on it and Billy’s eyes lock back onto Steve. He looks out of place, there, feathers ruffled, face bruised, on the pristine white sheets and minimalist setup. A little lost, a little strange. It's -- a weirdly pretty picture.

Steve takes a breath. Tries not to think about how this night *should have* gone. Focuses on how it *is*.

It keeps him from shaking right out of his own skin.

Padding over, Steve slides to his knees in front of him and starts working the laces of Billy's boots loose.

Billy let's him. Staying still as a statue as Steve works one boot off, then the other. Those sharp eyes stay stuck on him as he pulls off Billy's socks and puts them to the side.

Quiet, like he's intrigued. Like he's *hopeful*. Like he's desperate.

Steve reaches for his shirt next. Works the buttons loose, pushes the material carefully over Billy's shoulders. Leans in and presses a kiss to Billy's chest.

"*Steve*," Billy says, like he's pleading.

Because it's so far away from what he *wanted*. And Billy's never been the best at regrouping, especially from his terrible coping mechanisms.

"No," Steve says, already reaching for his belt, unbuckling it with deft fingers. "There's nothing wrong with you. I want you to say it."

Because this may not be that Billy *wants*-- but it's damn well what he *needs*.

"Just fucking --" Billy starts, then he reaches forward, fast, snatching Steve's hand to pull it back up to his hair. So *frustrated,* so messed up. "Just -- *please*."

Steve gives a little-- a *little*. Sinks his fingers into Billy's hair, pulls a bit, but not enough to *hurt*.

Leans up and kisses his cheek instead.

"I'm not gonna hurt you," Steve says. "I'm not gonna *punish you* for something that isn't even *true*. There's *nothing* wrong with you. Say it."

Billy grunts, like it's not enough. Like he's being eaten up inside with it.

“I know,” Billy finally, *finally*, says. After Steve doesn't think he's gonna say *anything*. “I *know* there's nothing wrong with me.”

His tone is bitter and the words are bitten out, but they're *there*.

Steve kisses the corner of his mouth. Pets through Billy's hair.

“Say it again.”

Billy's eyes focus on him. Suddenly sharp.

“Will you, if I say it again?”

Steve tilts his head. Looks at Billy-- really *looks*.

“Yes. If that's what you want. *Do* you?”

Billy's about to say *yes*, Steve can tell. He's got this indignant look on his face, like maybe Steve's stupid and didn't hear him the first time -- but then he just *stops*. Maybe it's the way Steve's looking at him, or maybe it's the hand in his hair, or *maybe* Billy's actually growing as a person, but he *stops*, closes his mouth, and says: “Do I *look* like I know what I want?”

Steve nods; keeps the idle movements of his fingers through Billy's hair. “Say it, Billy.”

“There's nothing wrong with me.” It comes easier the second time.

Steve kisses him. Cradles the back of his head, knelt between his spread knees, and kisses him. Slow. Soft. *Sweet*.

Billy kisses back a little harder, unable clearly to match Steve's pace. His hands go to Steve's arms and grip, pulling him closer.

Steve pulls back when he feels teeth. It's fucking *absurd* because usually Steve's *here* for a rough tumble, but-- tonight is different and it's his *fault* and--

He cuts that thought off before it can form. Tucks it away for later. For when Billy's back on solid ground and Steve can step away and hate himself later.

Sliding his hands down Billy's arms, he pulls free and guides Billy's hands up to his own mouth. Kisses bruised knuckles with so much *care*. Tries to pour his apologies into Billy's skin.

Carefully takes one of Billy's hands in both of his and starts pulling off his rings, one by one, scattering kisses in their wake.

“Say it again.”

“*Steve*,” Billy says, like Steve's being absurd. Like he's asking too much. Billy even pulls one of his hands free, gets it around the back of Steve's neck and pulls him in for another kiss.

Steve sighs against his mouth because he wants to fold into him. Wants to give in.

But he turns his head, Billy's lips pressing to his cheek.

“*Say it.*”

Billy's hand makes its way into Steve's hair. “Nothing wrong with me. Okay? Okay.”

Steve's eyes slide shut and he *groans*. “Billy--”

And Billy grins like he's *won* something. So his fingers tighten, even though they're the ones he punched a *wall* with, and he bites at Steve's jaw, teeth dragging over bone.

Steve's breath catches and he lets it go on for *too long*. Lets himself grow too hot, *too hungry*--

Snaps into movement. Shoves Billy back onto the forgiving press of the bed, tugs Billy's belt loose, and climbs up after him.

Billy's *still* grinning-- right up until Steve gets him around the wrists, ties them together with the worn leather of Billy's belt, and sits back, flush high on his face, mouth pursed in a frown.

“*Keep* your hands *there*,” Steve says. “Now, *say it.*”

Billy's not rendered speechless too often. But the way he's looking at

Steve now, a little *dumbfounded*, is a testament to the fact that it *does* happen.

Steve sees him move a *bit*, testing the knot, but that's *it*. Like Steve startled the fight right out of him.

“There's nothing wrong with me,” Billy says, after a beat.

Dipping down, Steve kisses him again. Just as slow, just as *soft*.

Then, he pulls back and starts leaving a litter of kisses along his chest. Lets his fingers roam. *Worships* Billy's skin.

“Say it again.”

“*Steve*,” Billy says again, but there's less bite, less frustration. And, after a moment and a few more kisses, he goes, “There's nothing wrong with me.”

Steve glances up at him. “I almost believe you believed it, that time.”

“Look, I *know* there's nothing fucking wrong with me,” Billy says.

Steve's mouth presses into a thin line. He presses a kiss to Billy's chest, over his heart.

“You're right. Usually you *do* know that. But not tonight, you don't.”

And Steve's *right*. Something in what that guy said had kicked something loose in Billy. He can see it, rattling around under Billy's skin.

Billy *pouts* -- honest to god *pouts* -- and says it again.

“Good,” Steve says earnest and soft, hands rubbing soothing lines up and down Billy's sides. “God, Billy, I'm so proud of you.”

Billy doesn't go completely soft, but he loosens a little. Goes a little slack.

He doesn't say anything, just *looks* at Steve with those dark eyes of his, which is a sign in and of itself that Steve is doing something *right*.

And Steve isn't *great* with words. Not the way Billy is. Or Dustin and the other brats. Not Nancy. He's more than happy to let others do the talking *for him*. Steve's kinda *stupid* and *he knows* that, but--

But he sucks it up because Billy *needs him.*

“You're so talented, baby. You worked so hard to get up on that stage tonight, and-- you were *breathtaking*.”

Billy hums. “Glad you came. Glad you decked that guy,” Billy says. “Or I woulda.”

And then he would've been *banned*.

Steve winces but manages to hide it. Doesn't say *it wouldn't have been a problem if I hadn't come with that stupid sign and ruined it all.* Doesn't say *I almost fucked it all up and I'm so sorry*.

Knows Billy doesn't need to hear any of that.

So he busies himself with stripping Billy down.

“Seriously, though,” Billy says, because of *course* he won't shut up about it. “It meant a lot. I fuckin’ -- love that about you. How you get so fiery.”

And Billy looks a little drunk, a little moonstruck. And he's only had one beer and *nothing* from Carol’s selection.

Steve breathes out sharp, tugging Billy's pants down his thighs. His calves.

“We're not talking about me, right now, Billy.” Steve insists.

Billy makes a face. And Steve can tell he’s still got energy, electricity burning underneath his skin, because he says: “That’s *weird*. Pretty sure *I’m* talking about you *right now*.”

“Well, *stop*.” Steve says, in that same unyielding tone he told Billy to get on the bed with, and he tosses Billy's pants aside and starts kissing up the inside of his thigh. “Say there's nothing wrong with you. Say you did nothing wrong.”

Billy huffs, but some more of the fight goes out of him.

“There’s nothing wrong with me,” he repeats. He tries to look at Steve, but with his hands tied together, he has to lift himself off the bed with his abs, and he eventually flops back, eyes on the ceiling. “I did nothing wrong.”

“You're so--” Steve pulls back, eyes roaming. “Baby, you're so gorgeous. So *good*. There could never be *anything* wrong about you. Even if you always drink all the almond milk.”

Billy laughs a little, which is good. It means he’s calming down. He shifts his legs a little, spreading himself out on the king sized bed, like he didn’t even notice how *much* of it there was. Probably *didn’t*, when they first came into the room. Even when he first sat down.

“Sorry,” Billy says, then, “thank you,” right after.

And he’s still not *normal*, still shifting around like he’s too big for his skin, but he’s miles away from punching walls, from asking *Steve* to punch him.

Steve hums. “Anytime. *Always*, Billy. Even when you don't remember-- I'm here to remind you.”

Billy makes a noise in his throat. “You gonna untie me, pretty boy?”

“You gonna behave?”

Billy shifts. He is quiet for a second, as he pulls against his belt, like he’s *testing* it.

“*No*,” he finally says.

Like he’s unsure about it, like there’s heat behind it. Like he thinks, maybe, *maybe* Steve won’t accept it.

“Then, no.” Steve says, but it's kind.

He rubs over Billy's thighs and hips. Kisses the inside of his knee.

“Say it one more time for me.”

“There's nothing wrong with me.” His breath hitches in the middle of it.

“Good, baby. You're so good, Billy.”

Billy *shudders.* He's not one to normally be undone by praise, but then again, he's not one to be begging to be hurt or taken apart, either.

“*Steve,”* he says.

“I've got you,” Steve promises. “You trust me?”

Billy nods, fervent. “Yeah,” he breathes out, breath hard, heavy.

And they don't normally *do* this. Billy doesn't normally *do* this, not from this side of it, anyway. But he needs it. He's shaking with it, fingers clenching into fists, trapped above him.

Steve's still got blood on his polo. His lip is still split. The fingers on his right hand, the knuckles, are all kind of swollen.

He doesn't care.

He digs into his pocket, pulls out a tube of lube, and moves to help prop Billy's hips up with a pillow. Kisses across his stomach as he does. Whispers praise against his skin.

Steve can shake apart later.

“You're gonna come on my fingers,” Steve tells him, once he's got Billy exactly how he wants him, hands over his head, legs spread and knees up. “I'm gonna make you feel *so good*.”

Billy's breathing is *loud* in the silence of their room.

“God, *Steve*,” he says. “Please. *Please.”*

He lifts his hips off the bed, squirming. Like he can't get enough of Steve's touch. Like he *needs* more of it.

Steve presses a promise to Billy's hip. Slicks his fingers up. Teases at the heat of him with gentle touches, and then sinks a finger in *slow.*

Billy sucks in a gasp as Steve presses *in*, his whole body going tight, like he's *ready*.

His hips wiggle just a bit, squirming like he wants more, but he doesn't move to press down, to *take* -- because he *trusts* Steve to give him what he needs.

"Fuck," Billy sighs as Steve's finger works inside him, and *shit*, Billy's *tight*.

"Relax," Steve tells him, working at the muscles with deft, careful touches, steadying him with his hand at Billy's hip. "You're safe here. It's just me and you."

"I'm relaxed," Billy says, but Steve feels him loosen up a little, just at the realization that he *wasn't*. "God, *Steve*."

"That's it," Steve curls his finger just right. "So good, baby."

"More?" Billy asks, but it's not pushy. Like he's finally understanding that Steve's got the reins now. That Billy's just along for the ride.

So Steve gives it to him. Withdraws only to press back in-- just as careful, just as unrelenting, with two fingers.

Billy *moans*, a broken, sinful noise. This time, his hips do twitch, rocking off the bed a bit, rolling back onto Steve's fingers once he's pressed all the way inside.

From this angle, Billy is beautiful. All his muscles are taut, body glistening with the beginnings of a sheen of sweat. Between his legs, his cock is hard, already dripping from all the attention Steve's giving him. Billy gasps with it, breathing heavy as Steve works his fingers in, tightening around those digits with wet heat.

Steve wants to watch him *shatter*. Wants to see him go easy and lax in the aftermath. Go soft enough to touch again.

So he fucks his fingers in and out. Keeps it steady-- not fast but not slow-- gets Billy moving, gasping, *moaning*.

"You're doing so good. You're taking it so well, baby." Steve says,

kissing along the inside of his thigh. “So good for me, Billy.”

Billy shudders under the attention, under the praise. It’s interesting to watch, and it feels important, too, like Steve is getting to see something so rare. Because sure, Billy goes belly-up for him, but he doesn’t get like this, doesn’t ever give Steve *complete* control, doesn’t let people see him so close to breaking. Doesn’t often *need* like this.

Soon, Billy’s panting hard, hips rolling as Steve’s fingers press deep, curling enough to make Billy’s cock drip.

“*Steve*,” Billy says, and he’s begging, voice tight, murmured little gasps of *please, please*, falling from his lips. “Can’t, I *can’t*,” because Billy *always* comes with a hand on him -- or a mouth, or *Steve*. Probably doesn’t think he *can*, even though he sounds *so close*.

“You can. You can, Billy, I promise.” Steve says, touches nerves, presses a little harder. “I'll be right here to catch you, sweetheart. Let go.”

It doesn’t happen instantaneously.

Billy *whines*, like he *wants* to, but doesn’t believe he can. But Steve murmurs his encouragements again against his skin, lips to Billy’s thigh, and presses in, fingers working Billy until his hips raise off the bed.

He’s panting and grunting and gasping, and then finally, *finally,* Billy breaks. He’s quiet when he does, his whole body going tense just a moment before -- and then he’s crumbling, gasping out, wet and broken, as he spills himself onto his stomach, cock jerking as he clenches around Steve’s fingers, muscles contracting with each wave of pleasure.

Steve eases him through it. Works him through the high and softens the crash. Pulls his fingers free before Billy can get too sensitive and wipes his hand off on the sheets.

He's on the bed proper with him in an instant. Working his hands free, letting him loose, kissing his brow.

“You're so good, baby. So perfect. You did so well.”

Billy's arms are loose and soft when they go around Steve, like he hasn't quite gotten the hang of moving yet. He *still* shudders at the praise, face finding Steve's neck, like he's embarrassed.

Steve lets him. Holds him and lets him hide, pressing his mouth to Billy's hair even though it hurts a little.

"You must be exhausted," Steve says, after a moment. "You should get some rest."

"Nah," Billy says, against Steve's skin. "Don't wanna. Not tired."

"Then I should at least get you cleaned up," Steve says. "Get something on your eye."

"Doesn't really hurt," Billy says, curling into Steve's space. "Hand hurts, but that's *my* fault."

"Stop it," Steve snaps, tone firm, but fingers gentle in his hair. "*None of it* was your fault."

"I punched a wall, Steve," Billy says, with a bit of a laugh. "That was kinda *stupid*."

"Oh," Steve falters. "Well, okay, *yeah*."

Billy shifts, until he's pressed with his back to Steve's chest, hauling Steve's arm around him. The most *pushy* little spoon Steve's ever *met*.

"Thanks," Billy says. "For making me not stupid." He pauses a second, and then Steve can practically *feel* him grin. "And I didn't *know* I could come like that. *Jesus*."

Steve hides a small smile in his curls. "Anytime. Always."

Billy hums, then turns, shifting so they're face to face. Clearly, still full of energy. Sometimes, Billy *sacks out* after an orgasm.

"You could fuck me," he says. "Wanna feel you."

Steve hesitates.

It's not that he doesn't *want* to. He *always* wants Billy. But.

But Steve feels *drained*. It was, like, the hottest thing in the world, having Billy like that, and Steve is *hard* but *barely*, so focused on Billy and not freaking out all over him.

But Steve doesn't know how to say *no* and not have Billy *take it wrong*.

So he nods and says: “Okay.”

Billy looks at him for a moment and Steve can’t help but focus on that tiny crease in the middle of his eyebrows. Like he’s *thinking*, and that’s the *worst*.

“Hey, what’s up?” Billy asks, hand coming up to rest on Steve’s chest. And his movements are still kinda slow, kinda lax. Like he’s not *truly* himself, but he doesn’t seem nearly as bad off as he had been, earlier. Now, he just looks concerned.

“Just worried about you,” Steve says, and it's true.

Billy blinks, like he never considered *that*.

“I’m fine. I just got -- riled, I guess. I’m fine now.”

“You sure? It's okay if you're not.” Steve says, gaze darting over his face.

For a moment, Billy falls quiet, like he’s thinking about it. Like he’s gotta try and suss it out.

“I’m *better*,” he finally ends up saying. “Because you didn’t let me fucking -- self destruct. Or keep trying to get you to punch me.” Billy takes a breath, looks at Steve, and says, “Are *you* fine?”

Steve doesn't know if he can lie. Doesn't know if he can look Billy in the eye and tell him *yes*. Doesn't know how to say *I was fine and then I wasn't and then you weren't so I had to be and now I don't know*.

So he shrugs, a small and feeble thing, and finds one of Billy's hands with his.

“I got blood on my favorite polo,” Steve says.

“I'll get it out for you,” Billy says, kind. “I'm good at that. It's like, a personal superpower.”

His fingers curl around Steve's.

“Okay,” Steve says, and then, because he can't help it: “I'm sorry.”

Billy's brows pinch. “For *what?*” And he looks honest to god *confused*.

“For messing up your big night. I thought it would be funny-- the sign-- I didn't know anyone would--” Steve's breath hitches and his eyes drop, and he squeezes at Billy's hand. “I didn't think anyone would do that, not around here, but it wouldn't have happened if I'd just *stayed home*. You wouldn't have felt like this. It's--"

It's my fault you feel like you're not good, like-- you're wrong, it's my fault and--

“-- I'm sorry.”

Billy makes a noise like his heart is breaking, arms going around Steve's midsection, holding him tight even though he's so loose.

“Steve, *no*,” Billy says. “I loved that sign. I love -- fuck, I love that you *came* tonight. It means a lot, a fucking *lot* that you dragged yourself out of the house to see me. I saw you in the crowd when I got on stage and I just -- my night was *made*, baby. There's bigots everywhere. He coulda taken one look at me and said the same thing, coulda heard Carol call me gay. Doesn't *matter*. What matters to me is that you were there. That you came. That you cared enough to make me a fucking *sign*.”

Steve sucks in a tight breath and nods, even if he doesn't really *agree* or *get it*. He shuffles closer on the bed, pressing his forehead to Billy's.

“I just wanted you to have a good night.”

“Look,” Billy says. “I did. Up until someone was an asshole to me and my friends, I did. And there's no part of *that* that's your fault. I'm sorry you think it is. It's just -- jesus, it's life. It happens. It's not the

first time and it won't be the last. It's *okay*."

"It's *not* okay. He made you-- I *know* that look you got. The way he made you *feel* is not *okay*, okay?"

"I know," Billy says, and he probably *does* know. But he just stopped for a while. "Look, it just hit real close to home. That's all. Normally, I can deal. Just -- not tonight. Not with that guy. If you hadn't been there, Steve, I would've -- I don't know what I would've done, okay?"

"I'm glad I was there, then." Steve says.

"Me too," Billy says, arms going right around Steve. "Do *you* wanna sleep? Or do you wanna get high? Blow some of Carol's stash?"

Steve shakes his head and then shrugs and then frowns. "I'm taking care of you. What do *you* need?"

"You being happy will make me happy," Billy says. "Tell me what to do, baby."

Steve is at a loss for a second.

Then: "I wanna shower."

Billy nods, easy. "Okay." And then, almost *immediately*: "Holy shit, I bet the shower is *great."*

Steve snorts. "You're obsessed."

Billy shrugs, then pushes himself up so that he's sitting. With a grunt, he stretches his arms, his neck, his back.

"What, can't I be obsessed with the way you feel next to me in a shower?" He pauses for a beat and says, "It's hot as *fuck*. All like, slick and shit."

Steve laughs, feeling a little less shaky as he pushes up, too. Better, now, that Billy seems to be finding his footing.

"I mean, like, *mood*, but--"

And then Billy's kissing him, easy and slow, hands on Steve's face. When he pulls back, he's smiling in a soft sort of way. Like he's *happy*, even with all the shit that went down today. And that eases Steve a little, too. Even if Steve tries not to put *too* much stock in just how affectionate Billy looks right now.

"Shower?" Steve asks, throat working, voice breathy.

"Shower," Billy says, and then he's pushing off the bed, pulling Steve along behind him to the *giant* bathroom.

Billy skids to a stop in the doorway of the bathroom, eyes *wide*.

"Holy *shit*."

The shower's big enough to have an orgy in, probably -- because that's, what, at least four people? -- and jacuzzi tub probably is, *too*.

"I think I just *came*," Billy says.

"Well, *yeah*." Steve says, brushing by, pulling his shirt up over his head with a hiss.

"Baby," Billy says, stepping toward Steve, concerned. "What hurts?"

Steve purses his lips. "My cheek and my hand, mostly."

He tilts his face to the light for Billy to see, and then offers up his right hand, bruised knuckles and swollen fingers and all. Wiggles them a little when Billy frowns.

"Got knocked back into the bar, so my back kinda fucking hurts, but… otherwise I'm fine."

Billy turns him, then, hands gentle on Steve's skin. None of that anger from before in his touch, just something close to exhaustion -- or maybe just emotional fatigue.

"Doesn't look too bruised." And then the lightest of touches falls down Steve's spine. "Would a bath help? Would a bath and *weed* help? Or, how about a bath and weed and head?"

Steve laughs. “I think all those would be good. You really gonna give up the shower?”

Billy shoots him a look, like Steve’s stupid. Like he’s a little slow. “Being with you is *literally* the whole point. The bath is, like, the same thing.”

Steve turns back around to truly face him, pulls him close, finally getting a little skin on skin now that he's half naked. It feels good.

He kinda gets Billy's point.

“Bath, then.”

Billy turns the tub on, puts the stopper in, and then turns back to Steve. “Lemme help you with those,” he says, and starts to work on getting Steve out of his pants.

Steve lets him, hands on his shoulders as Billy strips him down until he's just as bare. Just as vulnerable.

When Billy straightens back out, Steve plucks at Billy's medallion, thumbing over the Virgin Mary and bringing it up to his mouth, kissing it.

Billy looks *lost*. Looks adoring. Looks *soft*.

He guides Steve into the tub before it even finishes filling up. Steve follows, settling against one end of the tub, watching Billy as he settles on the other, their legs a tangled mess in the middle.

Billy's legs are heavy against him as he dumps bath gel under the running water. Soon, the tub’s filling with something labeled *honey blossom*. It smells good, though, sweet and rich, and soon the whole bathroom smells *calm* and *soothing*.

Steve knows that Billy, as much as he would never admit it, fucking *loves* this kinda shit. Shit that smells good, shit that's *indulgent*.

Steve kinda wishes he could indulge Billy *more*. But Steve's never been good at being sly. Wouldn't be able to sneak too much by Billy without being called on it.

Smiling and sinking into the water up to his chin, Steve nudges at Billy's hip with a foot. “Hey.”

Billy catches his foot with a small smile. Touches him soft, rubs at the sole of it with his thumbs.

“Hey,” he says back.

“We should, like-- take a vacation or something. Go visit my mom and, like, backpack across Europe.” Steve says. “You could bring your guitar. Go solo. Play at pubs and shit.”

“Yeah?” Billy says. “And stay in hostels? Or somewhere a little ritzier?”

But he's smiling.

Steve shrugs. “Figure it out on the way.”

“Yeah,” Billy says, looking kind of like he's *already* trying to figure out his schedule in his head. “That sounds awesome.”

And Steve likes that idea. He likes it *so much*.

Flexing his foot in Billy's hands, he blows some bubbles at him.

Billy laughs and his thumbs dig *in*. Spoiling Steve, like he's gotta focus on *something*. And Steve *knows* that Billy's pretty tit-for-tat -- and is probably way too focused on the fact that Steve made *Billy* come, and Billy hasn't given Steve anything.

It's frustrating, sometimes, but it's kinda *cute*, too.

Steve moans, soft and slow, though. Lets his head lull against the lip of the tub and eases into it. The press of Billy's fingers, the warmth of his attention.

“You don't gotta,” Steve says.

“*Yeah,*” Billy says. “I *know* I don't gotta. But I *wanna.* So.”

His fingers glide over Steve's feet, working at the muscles, gentle,

kind in a way that Billy isn't always. Steve hums, and he feels *dumb*, but he can't stop *looking* at Billy. Staring. Drinking him in.

“How you doing, baby?” Billy asks. He seems more centered now, focused, now that he's got a task at hand.

“M’happy you're here. And-- and safe. I didn't like not knowing where you were.” Steve admits.

“When I was inside the club?” Billy asks.

“Yeah. Got dragged out. Couldn't find you. Didn't know what was happening.”

“I'm sorry, baby.”

Billy's fingers tighten a bit around Steve's foot, like an apology.

“Not *your* fault.” Steve says, splashing him a little. “I'm pretty sure *I* threw the first punch.”

“Pretty sure *he* did, with the shit he said. You were just being a good --” Billy takes a breath, squeezes again, “-- best friend.”

“Right,” Steve nods, biting in the inside of his cheek. “Sorry, uh… sorry about saying you were my-- well, *really*, I'm sorry about the *shit* Tommy and Carol are gonna give us in the morning.”

Billy just shrugs, like it’s nothing, like he’s not even bothered. Which is -- something. Because Billy *does* get bothered by shit like that, generally. He can be -- oddly *touchy* about certain subjects.

He grabs Steve’s other foot and starts working on that one, propping it up on his leg.

“Don’t think Tommy and Carol are gonna care.”

Steve snorts. “Reminder that I've known them longer? It'll be *how long have you been sucking cock, Stevie?* And *didn't know you were both such queens-- which one of you, like, takes it up the ass*?”

“*Pretty sure*,” Billy says, “that Carol knows just how much cock I suck.

I don’t think she’s all that great about keeping her mouth shut, which is fine, but that means that *Tommy* knows, because of *course* they’d talk about it, which means they’ve probably already wondered if I’ve ever sucked your cock.” Billy’s fingers wrap around Steve’s ankle, stroking over the skin there. “Besides, it’s not like you *confirmed* it.”

“I, uh… I *kinda* did,” Steve shudders, voice coming a little soft. “Sorta… *heat of the moment*, but.”

“Oh,” Billy says, after a beat. “Well. Look, I doubt they’d actually *believe* that. Besides. I figure they’d be more mad you didn’t tell them first, over anything *else*. Carol would be *personally offended* if she didn’t get to talk about cock with you, so.”

“As if she hasn't been talking about cock with me since we were, like, thirteen.” Steve snorts, nudging at Billy's chest with his toes. “But still. I'm-- I dunno.”

“You're what?” Billy asks.

“Sorry if it-- made you uncomfortable?” Steve shrugs, eyes on Billy's face. “Or-- or whatever.”

Billy purses his lips and *goddamn* is he sometimes hard as shit to read.

“You didn't make me uncomfortable, it's fine, Steve. Are you -- are you worried about Tommy and Carol giving us shit?”

“Worried?” Steve shakes his head, laughing. “Nah, baby. If anything, it might be fun. Now I don't have to keep my hands to myself so much.”

Billy chuckles and slouches a little, like he's relaxing. Like that was the *right* thing for Steve to say. “So true. Look, out of everyone we know, *they* are gonna give us the least shit about being *fuckbuddies*. Like, they have *zero* room to talk.”

“True.” Steve says, tilting his head, nudging at him again. “Worse, they're, like, *betrothed*, now.”

Billy makes a noise, half disgusted. “*Eugh*. Can you *imagine*?”

But his fingers drift over the hair on Steve's leg, light and soft. So unlike his tone.

Steve's smile goes small and delighted. “I think we've played this game before.”

Billy takes Steve’s leg and *pulls*, until Steve skids forward a bit in the tub, slouching, water lapping at his shoulders.

“We have. But you've got like, a hardon for weddings,” Billy grins. “So, that's pretty irresistible.”

“I've got a hardon for *you,”* Steve says and realizes it's probably a little too close to the *truth* of the matter-- even if it's a bit crude to be considered a confession. “But we haven't even *touched* on a *winter* wedding. Or the honeymoon.”

“I'm pretty sure the honeymoon would be like, spent in a tub like this,” Billy says, like he's not fussed about the whole thing. Like he could just *do it*. “Or in that fucking *bed*. Baby, it's so *big.*”

Steve laughs, sneaking his free foot up Billy's thigh. “You've said that *before*-- just not about a *bed*.”

Steve can *hear* Billy's breath go a little ragged. A little hitched.

“That's because you've got a *monster* in your pants, Steve Harrington. Maybe I just like big things, huh?”

Billy licks his lips, all slow and terrible.

“You? Liking *big things*?” Steve's eyes don't leave Billy's. “I never woulda guessed.”

Billy squeezes Steve's ankle again. “Don't rile me up, baby.”

“Or *what*?” Steve asks, even though he know he shouldn't, even though he knows what they both need is some sleep.

Which-- *fuck*, Steve's *gotta* be fucked if he's willing to put an orgasm off until morning because he's *tired*. *Knew* he was fucked when whatever they did in the bedroom, bringing Billy down like that,

knowing he was *okay* was *enough* for him. No orgasms necessary.

But he kinda already *knew* that.

“Or I'll come over there and fuck myself on your monster cock,” Billy says, all easy, like he's talking about the *weather*. “Ride you like it's my *job*. You wouldn't have to do a goddamn thing.”

But Billy's not moving, which means he *knows* something's up with Steve, knows he wasn't feeling too hot. Because Billy's a weirdly observant guy and he sometimes doesn't push things that Steve thinks he *might* push.

And Steve *wants it*. Loves watching Billy ride him, loves being *in him* and still not really having a lick of control.

Doesn't know what that says about him. That he's so willing to let Billy take the reins in most things.

But he doesn't think tonight is one of those nights where Billy should *have to*. Doesn't think he wants that. Just-- kinda wants to curl up with him in bed and *hold him*.

“I'd like that,” Steve says, throat working. “But-- but, like, not tonight? If that's… I just kinda wanna-- I dunno.”

Billy just *nods*, which is frustrating, in and of itself. Like he's so fucking *unreadable*, Steve's got no goddamn idea what's going on in his head. Not like before, where Steve knew exactly what he wanted, what to give him.

“Wanna go to bed?” Billy asks. “Smoke some weed, watch Netflix, and *then* go to bed?”

Steve lets out a long, heavy breath and-- and he *shouldn’t*, but he *doesn’t know* what’s *going on* with Billy, or going through his head, right now, so.

“As long as I get to curl up with *you*,” Steve admits. “Everything else doesn’t really *matter*.”

Billy just nods again, rinses some of the suds off himself with a

splash, and then hauls ass out of the tub, towel fast around his waist. Steve can tell he's probably a bit hard, but ignoring it as he tugs at Steve and opens up one of those big fluffy towels for him.

“Billy--” Steve says, even as Billy wraps him up in a towel, patting him dry and then bundling him up in it. “Hey. Billy--”

“What, baby?”

Steve breathes out sharp. “I’m *sorry*. That I’m not-- we can *still*--”

Billy frowns, big hands on Steve's shoulders, soft cotton keeping him from the warmth of his palms.

“You don't have anything to be sorry about,” Billy says, and he looks so *confused*. “Why don't we just go to bed?”

Steve shakes his head.

“I can *fuck you*, if you still want. I can give you what you want, Billy, you don’t have to--”

“No,” Billy says. Firm. “Come on, let's just go to sleep.”

And then he's pulling, tugging, leading Steve out of the bathroom and to the bed.

Steve follows, chewing on the inside of his cheek, pressing his tongue to the roof of his mouth. Swallowing down another apology because he can’t help but feel like he’s done something *wrong*. Like he’s crossed some boundary by asking for this and nothing else. By asking at *all*.

His throat feels tight. His gaze strays down as Billy pulls the blankets aside. He takes one breath, then another, and shuffles forward as Billy’s tossing some of the throw pillows aside. Rests his hand on Billy’s hip and presses his forehead between his shoulder blades.

“Baby,” Billy says, soft. “C’mon. Talk to me?”

He doesn't tug Steve toward the bed. Just stands there for him.

Steve swallows. “I just wanna give you what you *want*. But I don’t-- I don’t *know* what that *is*, right now. I don’t know if this is *okay*, Billy.”

Billy frowns, again. Lips twitching downward. “I'm fine,” he says, even though Steve knows that's not totally *true*. “You don't know *what's* okay? *Wait*,” and then Billy's face twists a bit. “Wait. Tell me you're not worried about *not* fucking.”

Steve’s cheek is gonna be fucked up again. Knows he needs to stop biting it; he’s gonna tear up his mouth, worrying it like this. Bites down *hard* anyways. He steps back, feels his shoulders draw up, feeling dumb, dumb, *dumb*.

Billy makes a noise in his throat and curses under his breath, but he doesn't *say* anything. Just eases Steve toward the bed and then climbs in after him.

“I don't know what you want,” Billy says. “And I don't -- want the answer to be *whatever you want*, because like, I don't give a shit about me right now, Steve. I'm trying to help *you*.”

Steve curls up over the soft sheets. Stares at Billy, for a long time, and sighs.

“I don’t want you to be *mad* at me.”

“I'm not mad at you,” he says, like he *wants* to say something else, but won't say it, and his forehead creases a little in the middle, which means he's frustrated. Again. “I'm definitely not *mad* at you for not sleeping with me when you're not feeling it, Steve.”

Steve closes his eyes, closes out the sight of Billy’s face for just a second; doesn’t want to see him or the judgement or the pity or the disgust when he says: “I just wanna *hold* you.”

And then Billy’s in his arms, piling himself on top of Steve, body heavy against Steve's chest. Warm and solid.

Steve lets out a shuddering breath. Presses his face against Billy’s hair, a little damp from the bath, and he wraps him up. Holds him tight. Tugs Billy with him under the sheets.

“It's okay,” Billy says, as he slips his arms underneath Steve. “It's okay.”

Steve just squeezes his eyes shut tighter. His tongue feels too big for his mouth. He wants to tell Billy *everything*, lay it all out, but Steve’s *never* been good with words. Has to learn new ones all the time.

So, he just pulls Billy even closer. Breathes out a shaky sigh. Tucks his cheek against Billy’s and lets that be *enough*.

Billy, for the most part, stays quiet. Just goes easy on top of Steve and breathes.

Eventually, when Steve thinks it's been so long that Billy *must* be asleep, Billy says, “Sorry you had such a shit day.”

“It *wasn't*,” Steve says, and okay, *some* of it was, but. “I got to watch you play.”

“Yeah, but you didn't even wanna leave the apartment,” Billy says.

“*So*,” Steve huffs. “I didn't want to *miss* it.”

“I know,” Billy says. “And I'm glad you came, I just -- don't wanna have made shit worse for you, I guess.” His voice is muffled against Steve's neck.

“You *didn’t*,” Steve says, earnest and almost desperate. “You *didn’t*, Billy, I *promise*.”

“You sure?”

For a moment, Steve's got no damn idea what that tone is in Billy's voice, but he's asking for reassurance, which isn't all that common. He's not really a *fragile* guy. But. Maybe today -- maybe today, he is.

“*Yes*,” Steve says. “Billy, I was *losing* it before you came and found us again. I-- I don't know what I would've *done* if something *happened* to you. I-- I *need* you, okay?”

“Nothing happened to me, Steve. I'm fine. I *promise* I'm fine. And *you're fine* -- I mean, *are* you?”

“Yes, *jesus*, yes.” Steve nods, quick. “I've got you. So… so, yes.”

Billy nods against his neck. “Okay. Yeah. You got me.”

Steve sighs, something tight loosening in his chest. “I got you.”

Billy seems to go easy when Steve does. Like he's wound up, just by Steve being wound up.

“Sorry for freaking out when you were freaking out,” Billy says, after another long beat.

Steve laughs. “Sorry for being freaked out while you were freaking out and then freaking out again after.”

Billy chuckles, the sound muffled again by Steve's skin. “Jesus, we’re a mess sometimes, huh?”

“Yeah,” Steve sighs, arms tightening up around him for a second. “Good thing we live with each other. Who else would put up with us?”

Billy just hums. Quiet, a little subdued. After a moment, he says, “We should go to bed.”

“Yeah,” Steve nods, but doesn't let him go. “Yeah, okay.”

Billy shuffles around a little bit, making himself comfortable, but doesn't pull away. Just goes a little lax and easy once he’s all settled.

“Thank you,” Billy says. “For coming tonight. For helping me. For all of it.”

Steve presses a kiss to the side of his head. “Anytime, Billy. Really.”

“Sleep well, baby,” Billy mumbles, face still against Steve's neck, like he's not giving that up for the world.

It’s funny. Steve doesn’t usually go to sleep so easily. Especially not after a stressful day. He doesn’t go down easy, pretty much ever-- but wrapped up in Billy? Warm and *sure*? He goes out like a light.

Sleeps through the whole night. Until the sun is pretty high in the sky, actually, and Steve is blinking awake not even realizing that he'd gone down.

He's still wrapped around Billy. Has his nose pressed into his curls, arm heavy around his waist, Billy's back to his chest. He feels Billy's fingers trailing over the veins in the back of his hand, hums at it, and wiggles his feet to find a cold spot in the sheets next to Billy's.

"You 'sleep?" Steve whispers.

Billy doesn't say anything at first, but his fingers do stop moving for a second, like he's startled. Then, they start again.

"Hey," Billy eventually says. He still sounds sleepy, like maybe he just woke up.

"Hi," Steve mumbles, twisting his hand over, catching Billy's fingers.

"Hey," Billy says again, pushing back into Steve's space a bit.

They don't normally sleep together. Or, at least, if they do-- one of them is up and about before the other. He never pictured Billy as this *cuddly* in the mornings. It's a pleasant surprise.

Tucking his face against Billy's neck, Steve breathes in slow, squeezing at his fingers. "Morning."

"You sleep okay?"

"Mm," Steve nods, rubbing his nose against Billy's sleep warm skin. "You?"

"Yeah," Billy says, turning his head a bit to let Steve nose against his neck. "Kinda slept like a rock."

"Big bed," Steve says, like that's a *reason*.

"Yeah," Billy says, sarcastic, but punctuated with a yawn. "I really *sprawled out*. That's *gotta* be it."

Billy pushes back against Steve, like he's emphasizing just how much

space he *didn't* take up.

Steve's breath catches a little, a warm flush blooming up through his chest as friction gives way to a spark of pleasure. *Christ*, he hasn't had morning wood since he was *seventeen*.

"Definitely why," Steve nods.

Billy makes a noise, pleased, like he just noticed that Steve's hard behind him. He gives an extra little wiggle and rubs over Steve's fingers with his thumb.

"You feeling better this morning, baby?"

Steve groans, pressing his face against Billy's neck and just breathing for a second. Then, he nods.

"Yeah," he says, pulling Billy a little tighter, a little *closer*. "Are you?"

Billy hums, a low and happy sound. *Pleased*. "*Yeah*," he says. "I've got a big bed, a big shower, a big fuckin' bath..." he trails off, pressing *back,* ass grinding against against Steve's cock.

Steve bucks a little, huffing out a breath, and then a laugh-- feeling warm against Billy, in the sunlight, in a big bed. "You're *not* subtle."

Steve can *hear* Billy's breath hitch when he bucks against him, skin against skin, leaving *nothing* to the imagination. And yeah, so maybe Billy's got a *thing* about Steve's dick being big -- but it's fucking *great* for Steve's ego, so he's not about to complain.

"Subtle doesn't get me laid," Billy hums.

"Can't fuck you, yet, baby." Steve tells him. "Gotta work you open again."

"Jesus christ, Steve, what are you *waiting* for, then?" Billy says. "Do you want me to buy you coffee? Because I will walk downstairs bare ass fucking naked to buy you coffee if you want coffee."

Steve dissolves into laughter, pressing his face to Billy's shoulder, *shaking* with it as he giggles against him, arms wrapping Billy up and

holding him close to keep him from *trying it*.

Because he *would*. Billy *would* go down to the lobby and fucking order Steve a coffee if he thought it would make Steve laugh, if he thought Steve would *want* it. Which is just -- so fucking *Billy Hargrove* that it hurts.

“Literally why aren’t your fingers in me *right now*,” Billy whines, and Steve wonders if Billy woke up just as hard.

“Hold *on*, oh my *god*,” Steve says, still smiling against his shoulder, letting his hand smooth over the taut lines of Billy's stomach, finding Billy half aroused and firming under his touch. “You want it *that bad*?”

Billy gasps like Steve’s touch is the *best thing ever*, like he’s been dying for it, ever since he woke up.

“I *always* want you that bad,” Billy says, shifting, hips bucking against Steve’s hand. And then, of course, because he’s *Billy*, he punctuates it by grinding back against Steve’s cock. “Could have you fuck me every goddamn day and not have it be enough,” he says.

Steve groans. “Where the fuck is the lube even *at?”*

“If you think I was paying attention *at all* to where you put the lube yesterday, you’re out of your mind.”

Steve's laughing again, pulling away to rifle through the sheets. Snorting when Billy groans somewhere over his shoulder, impatient and *loud.*

“I'd threaten to tie you up again, but I don't even know where your *belt* went.”

“Wanna be able to *touch* you,” Billy says, voice already gravely with want.

Because when Billy wants, he *wants*.

When Steve finds the lube and turns back to him, Billy’s spread out on his stomach, looking at Steve like he’s gonna die if someone

doesn’t touch him soon. Jesus, what a drama queen.

But Steve *wants* to touch him, so.

So, he drags his hands up the backs of Billy's legs. Smoothes his palms up, kisses between the divots of Billy's lower back. Eases his mouth up Billy's spine. Hums when Billy arches.

“Gorgeous,” Steve tells him.

“Dying here,” Billy says, but he sounds so fond, so playfully put out as he shifts on the bed, looking like a tanned deity spread out on the pure white sheets.

Steve kisses the line of his right shoulder blade. “You'll survive.”

“No, I’m probably gonna die right here,” Billy says, turning to look at Steve. “C’mere and kiss me, at least, you asshole.”

Steve grins, leaning down to kiss the corner of his mouth. “Needy.”

Billy is fast, turning on his side to turn the kiss into something a little deeper.

“*Yeah*,” Billy says, pulling back just enough to talk. “You *know* I'm needy as fuck. But you always take *such* good care of me, baby. I can't *help* but be greedy for it.”

Steve shudders and gives him a *look*. “You're a dirty, rotten cheater, too.”

But then he's kissing him again, morning breath be damned. Slow and deep, licking into his mouth, and making Billy *whine* when he draws back.

“You trust me?” Steve asks, kissing the corner of his mouth.

“*Knowing* you is cheating?” Billy asks, having the audacity to look *pleased* with himself. Maybe for making Steve shudder, or maybe for getting a longer kiss out of it. Maybe both. “Yes, I trust you. You *tied me up*, baby. Course I trust you.”

“Good,” Steve says, biting at his jaw. “Turn back over onto your stomach. I am gonna take *such* good care of you.”

Billy *whines*.

“Okay, I *don’t* trust you not to take *forever.”*

It's hilarious, because Billy's got *all* the patience in the *world* to tease Steve open, but he's the pushiest little shit when it comes to him. Greedy and needy and impatient.

But he flips anyway, folding his arms under his head. He just looks *petulant* about it.

Steve takes his time kissing across his shoulders. Takes his time running his hands down Billy's sides. Even starts dawdling down, lips pressing to each vertebrae as he goes, just to make Billy huff and squirm.

But then, before Billy realizes what he's up to, Steve's got two slick fingers pressing, pressing, *pressing*. Digs his teeth in against Billy's skin and *slowly* works Billy open with those fingers.

Billy *jerks* underneath him, surprised and delighted, judging by the noise that escapes from his lips as Steve presses in. He's still loose from last night, muscles easy and lax, accepting Steve's fingers with just a bit of pressure.

“Fuck, baby,” Billy says, fingers fisting in the white sheets. “*Fuck,* you feel so good.”

Steve hums, trailing lazy kisses over his back, contrasting with the firm way he's fucking into the heat of Billy's body with deft, slick fingers. “You take it so *well*, Billy.”

It's funny, how easy Billy goes, how *soft*, once he's getting what he wants.

“*Baby*,” Billy says.

When Steve kisses his neck and fucks his fingers in, filling Billy up all the way, Billy *moans*, loud and ragged. Breathy. His hips roll against

the bed, against Steve's hand, wanting *more, more, more*.

Steve keeps him like that for a while. Keeps the pace steady, unrelenting, *deep*. Slicks him up and stretches him out *good* before withdrawing and adding another finger.

He mutters praise against Billy's skin the entire time. Works him over, groans as Billy lifts his hips up so Steve will give it to him faster, deeper. Tells him how *fucking beautiful* he is.

By the time Billy is loose, by the time Steve's fingers slide so easily inside him, Billy's a *mess*. Nowhere near to as coherent or as pushy as he was before. Hell, when Steve looks, noticing Billy's gone a little incoherent, he's got his teeth in a *pillow*, white fabric going a little transparent from spit.

Literally, a *pillow-biter*. Steve's gonna give him *so much shit* for that later.

But right now, Billy's rolling his hips and Steve's fingers are curling *just right* and the guy sounds close already. So.

"You okay, baby?" Steve asks, easing up a little, nipping at his shoulder to catch his attention. "You ready?"

Billy nods. He must get the cotton out of his mouth, because then he's *talking*.

"Steve, *please*," he begs, breathing heavy, breathing hard. "God, please, I need you."

He even arches up, ass up, and he looks so goddamn *pretty* like that. Not to mention slutty as hell, which is a *treat*, because as much of a flirt that Billy is, he doesn't seem to *get* like this around anyone else. Like he just doesn't *trust* anyone else the way he trusts Steve.

"God, look at you," Steve breathes, dreamy and so *pleased*, always so happy to get Billy like this, and he withdraws in order to coax Billy over onto his side, wiping his hand clean and then reaching up to grip Billy by the jaw tilting his face up to meet his eyes. "So pretty for me."

Steve can *see* Billy swallow, can see the way he goes all easy under Steve's touch.

"*Steve*," Billy says, and his voice sounds wrecked, but he's no longer jostling for control, which is just so *rare*. "C'mon. Please. *Please.*"

Billy snakes himself closer, wrapping his legs up in Steve's. Shaking with the need to be *close*.

"You said you trusted me," Steve reminds him, kissing the corner of his mouth. "I'll give you what you need, right?"

And Billy doesn't *complain*, even though he's *maybe* rocking up against Steve's thigh. "Just wanna feel full of you. Wanna make you feel good," Billy says. But he's not pushing, just lazily kissing Steve, slow and careful, like Steve's gonna tell him *no*.

Steve lets him move like that. Lets him rut and kiss him slow. Breathes steady and draws his hands up and down Billy's sides, gripping his hips and helping him move in a hazy, filthy grind.

"Can't decide," Steve eventually says, between one kiss and the next. "Can't decide how I want you."

Billy ruts up against him, wiggling, squirming until he's grinding against Steve, too. Like he's not satisfied unless he gets Steve moaning, breathing hard.

"However you want," Billy pants, lips against Steve's bottom lip. "Trust you."

Steve makes a sound from the back of his throat. He muscles Billy down proper, onto his back, and finds a home between his legs. Tugs him close, sliding across the sheets, and rocks against him, gives them both some friction, some tease.

Billy grunts and gasps, arms going around Steve like he's trying to hold on tight, body rolling delightfully underneath Steve's press.

Billy kisses him then, needy and hungry, licking into Steve's mouth, moans getting lost against Steve's lips. Steve swallows each sound, ruts against him as he reaches for the lube. *Distracts him,* with little

flicks of his tongue, with hints of teeth, as he slicks himself up, shifts, and then starts pressing *in.*

Billy gasps, wet and loud against Steve's mouth. And the *sounds* he makes really should be fucking *illegal*, unrestrained and truly wanton. His nails dig into the skin of Steve's shoulder blades and Billy shifts his hips *up*, easing the slide of Steve inside him.

He's so relaxed, so loose that it's easy. Body eating up Steve's length like he was made for it, like he does nothing other than offer himself up like this.

“Steve -- *fuck,* baby,” Billy pants, nails dragging hard against Steve's back.

Steve hisses, muscles in his shoulders bunching up, and he bucks forward, burying himself to the hilt as he presses his forehead to Billy's. “*Jesus*, Billy.”

“Feels so good. *You* feel so good,” Billy says, and then kisses Steve, long and slow as he rolls his hips, gasping into Steve's mouth when he moves *just right.*

Steve grunts, hands going to Billy's hips and squeezing. Trying to hold him still, hold him steady, while Steve catches his breath.

“God, you feel so fucking *close* to me,” Billy says, breathy, slurred. Like he's *drunk* on this.

And he looks so *happy*, so blissed out underneath Steve, and they haven't even *touched* any of Carol’s stuff. It's *insane*.

Steve takes a shuddering breath and then *rocks*. Doesn't pull out, just presses that much deeper, just to let Billy *feel it*. To give him a little *more.* Another *hit*.

“So fucking good, Billy.” Steve sighs, keeping up that subtle motion, kissing along his jaw. “Always feel so fucking *good*.”

Billy keens underneath him, going easy, so *good* as Steve treats him nice.

“Could do this for *hours,*” Billy says, hands drifting up and down Steve's back, just *touching*, like he's trying to memorize every knot in Steve's spine, every mole on his skin.

Steve hums, catching his mouth and dragging out, only to snap his hips right back in-- angled perfectly, driving in hard. Billy lets out a sound against his mouth and then Steve does it again. Then again. Then *again*.

“Okay,” Billy pants, “okay, I lied,” he manages, around a moan, body shaking as Steve pounds into him just right. “Baby. Baby, if you keep doing that, I'm not gonna -- not gonna -- oh, fuck me.”

Steve feels something tingling and fantastic curl at the base of his spine. He moans, shifting his weight to keep up that pace. Dragging out slow, driving in hard, filling Billy *just right*.

“Want you to come,” Steve breathes, eyes locked on the way Billy's face twists up. “Just like this. Want you to come on nothing but my cock inside of you, filling you up, stretching you out. Can you do that, baby?”

Billy moans, like the idea is hot enough to get him off.

He nods, desperate hands clawing at Steve's back.

“Yes, god, *fuck*, as long as you don't stop doing that. Don't fucking stop, baby,” Billy pants, making these sinful little noises every time Steve thrusts into him. “You're so *big*,” Billy babbles, “feel so *good*.”

Steve feels burning hot. Like it's white and churning in his belly. Spreading out, pumping through his veins until his breath is short, his skin is glistening.

He groans, driving into the welcoming heat of Billy's body over and over and *over*. Like an addict, shaking and wanting, desperate to push Billy further, to get him hanging on the edge of complete bliss.

Soon, Billy's gasping, moaning, very near to *shouting*, louder than Steve's ever heard him in their apartment.

“Please, please, please,” Billy begs, body tensed up and tight all over.

Like all he needs is a gentle push to shatter apart completely in Steve's hands.

“C'mon,” Steve breathes, pulling Billy's hips to meet his own, pressing in *harder*. “C'mon, baby, you can let go. *Let go*.”

And just like that, Billy crumbles. He shouts, loud, body *shaking* as he comes apart, spilling in between them. Steve fucks him through it, hard, until Billy goes a little quieter, until his muscles loosen and he’s just *panting*, gasping Steve's name over and over again.

It doesn't take long for Steve to follow after him. He stutters through it, eyes squeezing shut, forehead pressing to Billy's as he drives in and spills out with a groan. Shuddering through it and bucking as the heat of Billy's body, the tight *clench* of it, wrings him out.

Billy goes boneless underneath him, arms flopping out to his sides, breath coming in heavy pants.

“Fuck, baby,” he says, lips at the corner of Steve's mouth. “You're too good.”

Steve groans, letting his weight settle against him. “Wanted to see if I could get a repeat performance.”

“Of what,” Billy pants, going a little breathless when Steve presses down on top of him, “me losing my shit just because you told me to?”

“Of you coming without me touching your dick,” Steve mutters, mouth pressing to Billy's cheek. “Looks like I did.”

“I think you *broke* me, baby,” Billy says. “Think you're spoiling me to hell and back.”

Steve pulls back to meet his gaze, voice soft. “That's not a bad thing. I wouldn't mind doing that. Spoiling you. If you'd let me.”

Billy's lips part as he stares up at him. Shocked, maybe. His hand curves over the nape of Steve's neck, and he doesn't know what to expect next, but--

But then there's a knocking, a *pounding*, at their door, and Tommy's

voice in a shrill pitch: “*Housekeeping*!”

“God *dammit*,” Billy says, and for once he looks actually a little annoyed by Tommy’s antics. “I was hoping to get in the fucking shower. Didn't even have a *chance,”* he mutters. “Get up, I can let him in or he's not gonna *stop*.”

Steve carefully withdraws and then rolls over, flopping onto the bed with a sigh. “Punch him in the throat. He knows better.”

Billy covers himself with *just* a pillow over his *dick* when he answers the door.

“*What?”* Billy says, and Steve can *hear* the scowl.

“Oh, shit.” Tommy says, cackling. “Did I interrupt a good time?”

“Yes!” Steve calls from the bed.

“Did you like, *need* something, or were you angling for an invite?” Billy says, shameless.

Tommy peeks around the corner, grinning, and Steve flips him off. “I don't think I'd survive Steve's dick, but I've always wondered what he'd look like on mine--"

Steve laughs as Billy bodily shoves Tommy back out into the hall and slams the door in his face.

“Check out is in an hour!” Tommy calls through the door. “We'll meet you guys downstairs for brunch.”

Soon, Billy's standing at the edge of the bed, looking down at Steve carefully. Like he's sizing him up. Trying to find out the answer to a question without even *asking* it first.

“Sorry,” he says eventually. “I know you thought he'd give you shit or whatever.”

“Nah, kinda expected it.” Steve shrugs. “Is it gonna bother you? Because he's gonna be at it, like, *all day*.”

“I'm pretty sure it'll be fine,” Billy says. “You sure you don't care?”

“As long as he doesn't talk about *spitroasting*, we should be kosher.” Steve nods, smile small, and he gestures toward the bathroom with a swing of his head. “We got an hour. Wanna try the shower?”

“What, you don't wanna fuck me while I blow Tommy?” Billy asks, but he's already tugging Steve out of the bed and toward the bathroom.

“Yeah, *no*.” Steve says, laughing as Billy shoves him toward the glass doors of the shower. “I'm good, thanks. I've got you. That's all I really need.”

Billy doesn't fuss, just pulls Steve into his arms and backs himself up against the glass, catching Steve's lips in a kiss. “You know how to make a guy feel special, Steve Harrington.”

Steve smiles against his mouth. “I try.”

The shower, in the end, is *totally* worth the wait.

Author's Note:

Songs and shit:

Sweatpants - Childish Gambino
One Bourbon, One Shot, One Beer - James Thorogood
Old 45s - Chromeo
Sad Story (out of luck) - merk